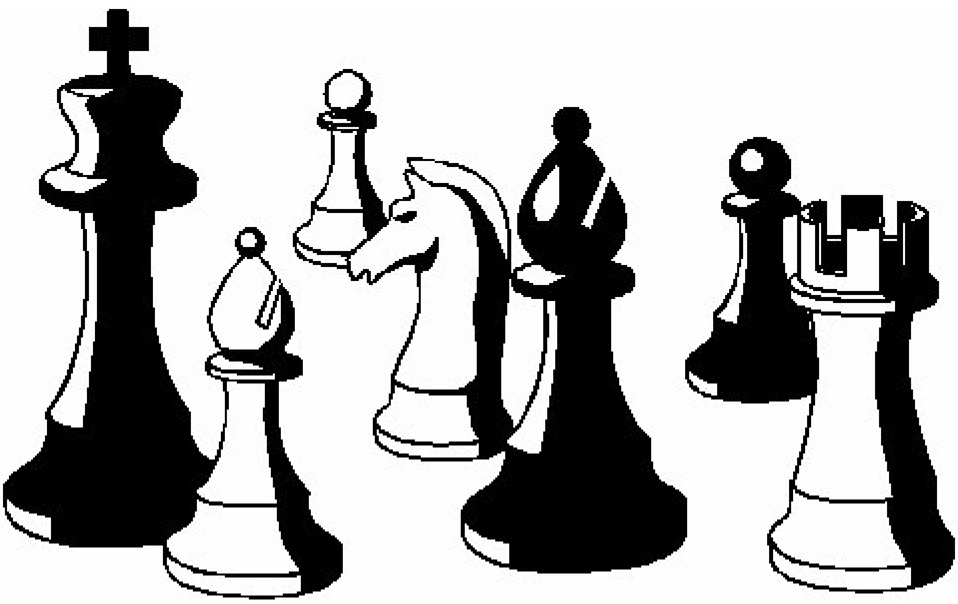
How to play Chess

By
Michael Crowe

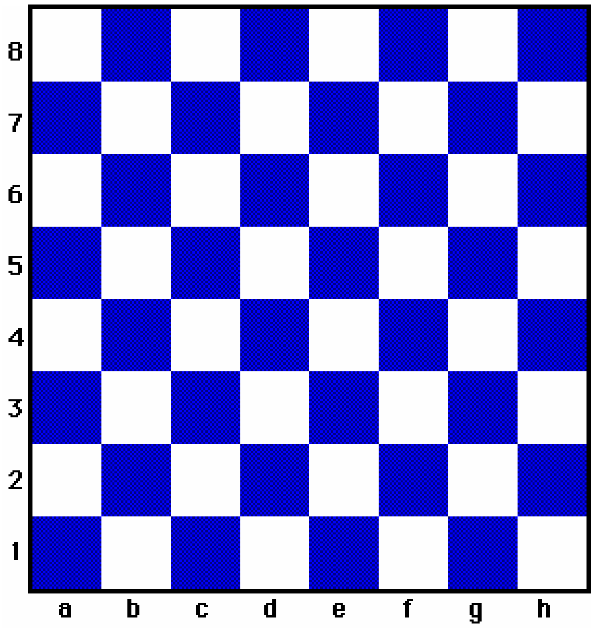


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THE CHESSBOARD IS YOUR KINGDOM

Chess was invented long ago. the names we use for the pieces date from the Middle Ages. In those days kingdoms were ruled by Kings and Queens. They lived in castles and had Bishops to advise them. They also had brave Knights to defend them. Even the peasants helped to defend the kingdom.

This is a chessboard.



It has alternating light and dark squares. All chessboards have the same pattern of light and dark squares. There are sixty four squares in all on a chessboard.

A basic rule is that you must set up a chessboard in a particular way when you start to play.
Each player must have a light square in the lower right corner.

REMEMBER: ***Light on the right!***

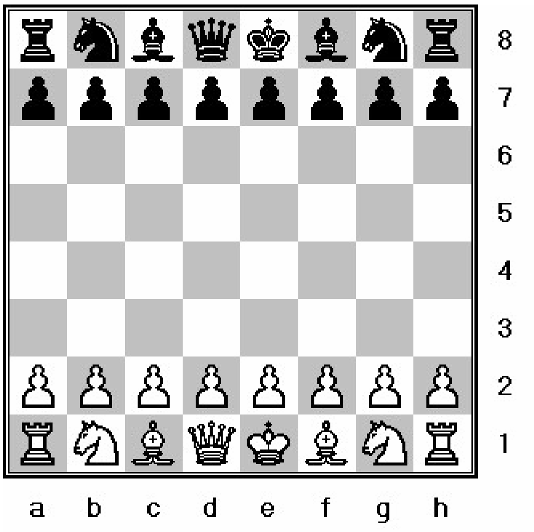
Chess Notation

All new players should learn to keep score using what is called "algebraic" notation. In the diagram above, you will notice that the board includes the numbers 1-8 along the left edge and the letters "a" - "h" along the bottom the board. We can use the combination of one letter and one number to describe each square on the board. The square in the bottom left hand corner is called “a1”. This is fully explained in detail on page 3 overleaf.

How To Read and Write Chess Moves

All new players should learn to keep score using what is called “algebraic” notation. In the diagram that follows, you will notice that the board includes the numbers 1 - 8 along the right edge and the letters “a” - “h” along the bottom of the board. We can use the combination of one letter and one number to describe each square on the chessboard.

The important thing to remember is how to identify the pieces you are moving. You just need to use a single



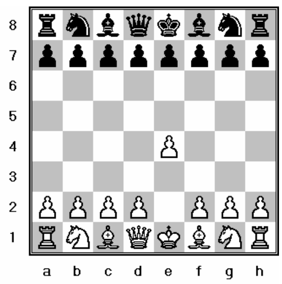
For example, the white King begins the game on **e1**. The black Rooks begin the game on **a8** and **h8**.
If I begin the game by pushing the pawn in front of the King two squares, we can describe the move as **e2-e4**, or simply **e4**. Moving the Knight on g1 to f3 would be written **g1-f3** or more simply **Nf3**.
An “x” is used to show that a capture has taken place. For example, Nxe4 means that the Knight moves and captures whatever was on e4.
You don’t necessarily need to include “check” in your scoresheet, but you can easily do this with “ch” or just “+”. For mate many players use “#”.

capital letter: **K: King Q: Queen R: Rook B: Bishop N: Knight**
Note that “P” is not used. Chess players have agreed that a move without a letter - such as e4 - is understood to be a pawn move.

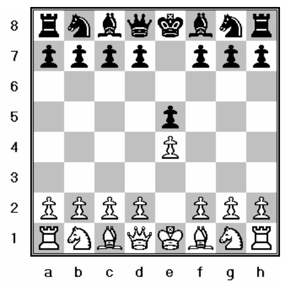
You are almost ready to start using chess notation. Just pay attention to the following symbols:

X	**Take or capture**	**# or ++**	**Checkmate**
O-O	**Castles Kingside**	**!**	**Good move**
O-O-O	**Castles Queenside**	**?**	**Bad move**
+	**Check**	**??**	**Blunder**

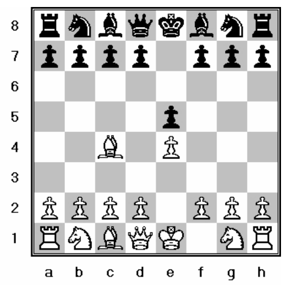
Let’s put into practice what we’ve just learned. We will use the famous Scholar’s Mate”.



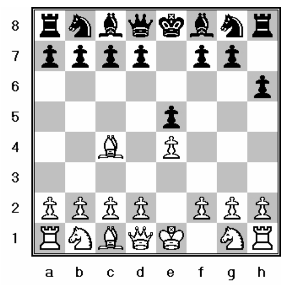
1. e4



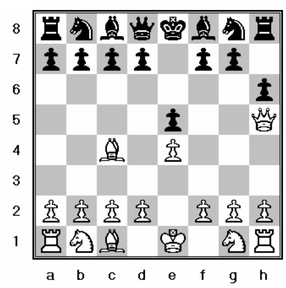
1...e5



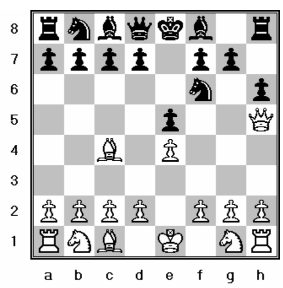
2. Bc4



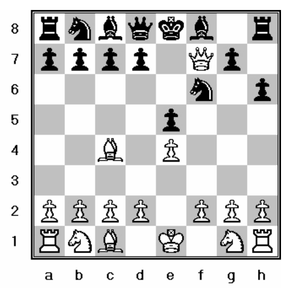
2...h6



3. Qh5



3...Nf6??

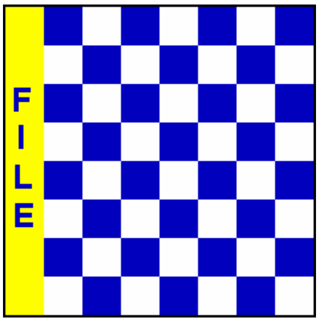


4. Qxf7#

Remember:

It’s a good idea to record your games so that you can learn from your mistakes when you look at them later.

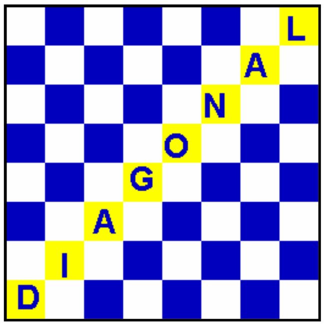
Chess Terms - Files, Ranks and Diagonals



Files are the rows of squares that run ***up and down*** the chessboard.



Ranks are the rows of squares that run ***across*** the chessboard.



Diagonals are the rows of squares that run ***at a slant*** on the chessboard.

Some simple rules regarding the chessmen:

Chessmen (pieces and pawns) can do either of two things:
1. They can move to vacant (empty) squares.
2. They can capture enemy chessmen.
Note the only piece that can never be captured is the King.
When an enemy chessman is taken, the piece or pawn that captures it takes its place on the board.

More about Notation.
For example, the White King begins the game on e1. The Black Rooks begin the game on a8 and h8. If we begin the game by pushing the pawn in front of the White King two squares, we can describe this move as e2-e4, or simply e4. Moving the Knight on g1 to f3 would be written g1-f3, or more simply as Nf3. This will become clear later, don't worry about it now.
An "x" is used to show that a capture has taken place. For example, Nxe4 means that the

The Chessmen

Your army and that of your opponent

♙ ♟ Each side has 8 Pawns

♘ ♞ Each side has 2 Knights

♗ ♝ Each side has 2 Bishops

♖ ♜ Each side has 2 Rooks

♕ ♛ Each side has 1 Queen

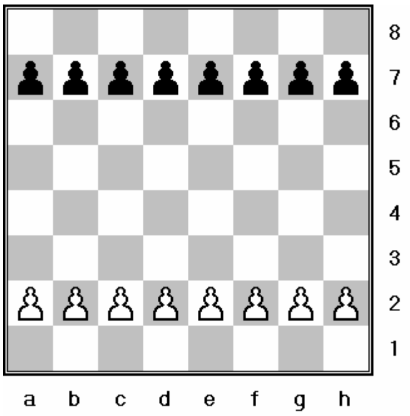
♔ ♚ Each side has 1 King

Each side has 16 men, 8 pieces and 8 pawns.

The first rule of chess is that WHITE moves first.

knight moves and captures whatever was on e4. You don't necessarily need to include "check" in your scoresheet, but you can easily with "ch" or just "+". For mate, many players use "#".

How the chessmen move.



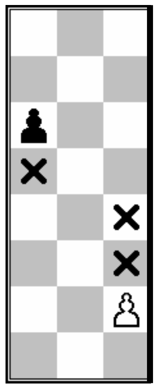
At the start of the game White's pawns stand on the 2nd rank, and Black's stand on the 7th rank as in our next diagram.

Each side has 8 Pawns

This is their starting position

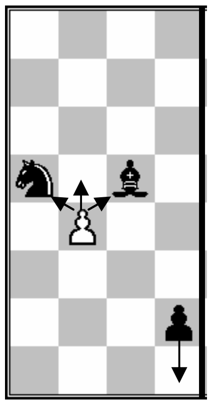
How the Pawn moves and captures
A pawn can move straight ahead one or two squares on its first move. After that, it can move only one square at a time, even if it didn't go two squares on its first move.

The pawn, like the foot-soldier in war, marches forward one square at a time. Unlike the other pieces, the pawn can NEVER retreat. Pawns that have not yet moved have the option of beginning their forward journey with a double move two-squares forward. The pawns may not jump other pieces or pawns.



The pawn captures differently from the way it moves.
The pawn captures diagonally one square ahead, as if it were fighting on its side with a short sword. . .

In the first diagram, the white pawn can move to any of the squares marked with an "X" By contrast, the black pawn, having already moved, has only one option.

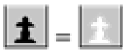


In the second diagram, the white pawn can move straight ahead, or else capture the black Knight or the black Bishop. Meanwhile, the black pawn is about to move to the end of the board. When a pawn reaches the last
rank, it becomes another piece! In most situations, it will become a Queen; you may not leave it as a pawn and you may not promote it into a King. As a result of pawn promotion, it is possible to have many Queens on the board at the same time, or other chosen pieces!

We assign a value to each chessman using the pawn as the lowest unit.

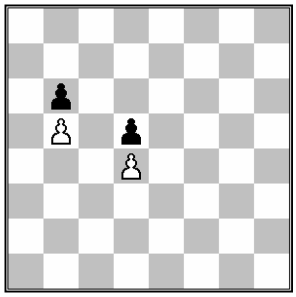
There is no chess rule concerning this, but it will make it easier to play a game if you have some idea of the relative value of the chessmen, particularly when you need to make a decision regarding exchanging one of your men for one of your opponent's.

THE PAWN = 1



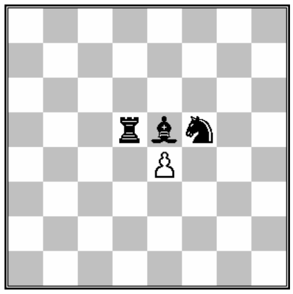
MORE ABOUT PAWNS

Pawns cannot jump over other pawns or pieces.
If blocked, a pawn can't move straight ahead until the other pawn or piece gets out of the way.



In the diagram on the right the pawns block each other and cannot move.

The Pawn in the diagram (right) can capture the Rook on the left, or the Knight on the right.

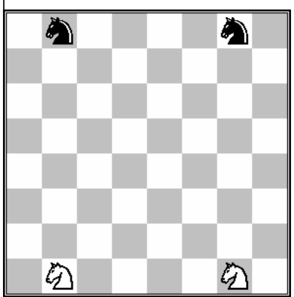


The Bishop however, is immune from capture as the pawn may only capture diagonally.

THE KNIGHT

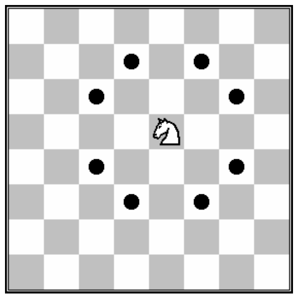
Each side has 2 Knights

How the Knight moves



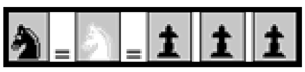
← This is their starting position

In the diagram on the right ➔ the Knight may land on any square that has a dot.



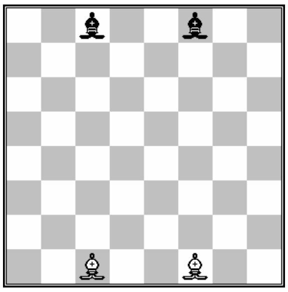
The Knight moves in an “L” shape, two squares forward and one to the side, or two squares sideways and one forward, or two square backwards and one to the side. The Knight may jump over friendly and enemy pieces without having any effect on the men it passes over.
The Knight captures any enemy piece or pawn it lands on.
We assign the Knight a notional value just as we did for the pawn.

THE KNIGHT = 3 =



THE BISHOP

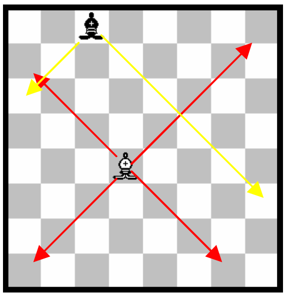
Each side has 2 Bishops



← This is their starting position

In the diagram on the right →
the Bishop may land on any
square that has an arrowhead

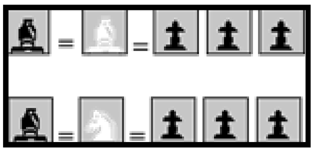
How the Bishop moves



The Bishop moves diagonally (at a slant) stopping at any empty square, according to choice. The Bishop may capture any enemy piece or pawn in its path.

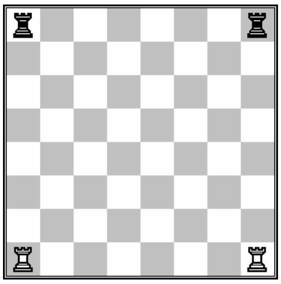
We assign the Bishop a notional value just as we did for the Knight.

THE BISHOP = 3 =



THE ROOK

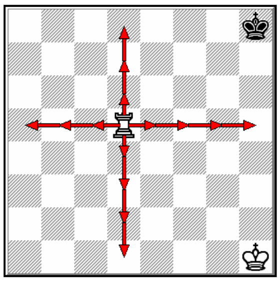
Each side has 2 Rooks



This is their starting position
←

In the diagram on the right →
the Rook may land on any
square that has an arrowhead

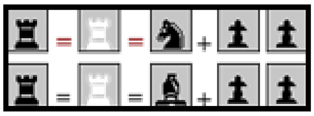
How the Rook moves



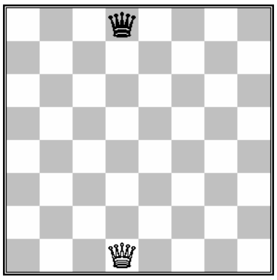
The Rook moves horizontally and vertically in straight lines stopping at any empty square, according to choice. The Rook may capture any enemy piece or pawn in its path.

We assign the Rook a notional value just as we did for the pawn.

THE ROOK = 5 =

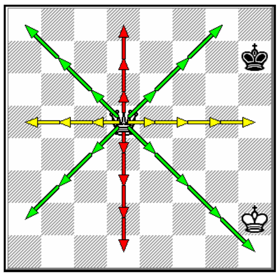


Each side has 1 Queen **How the Queen moves**



This is its starting position
🡐

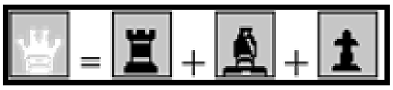
In the diagram on the right ➔
the Queen may land on any
square that has an arrowhead



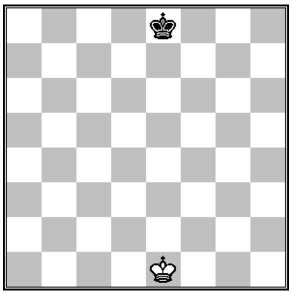
The Queen moves horizontally and vertically and diagonally stopping at any empty square, according to choice. Another way to look at this is to say that the Queen combines the powers of the Rook and bishop. The Queen may capture any enemy piece or pawn in its path.

Note: At the start of each game the Queen stands on a square of her own colour - Black Queen on a black square, White Queen on a white square.

We assign the Queen a notional value just as we did for the pawn.

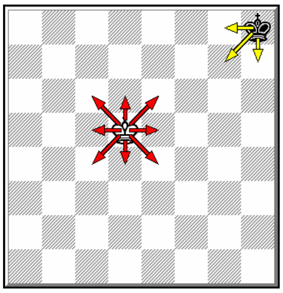
THE QUEEN = 9 = 

Each side has 1 King. **How the King moves**



This is their starting position
🡐

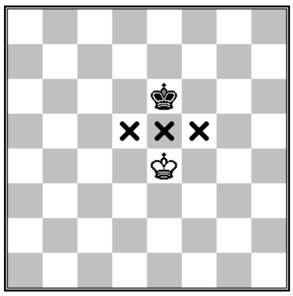
In the diagram on the right ➔
the King may land on any
square that has an arrowhead



The King moves only one square in any direction - horizontally,
vertically or diagonally. The King may capture any enemy piece or pawn in its path.

It is against the rules to move the King onto a square where it can be captured. If you do this by accident, we say that the move is illegal. The illegal move must be taken back, and a legal move must be played instead.

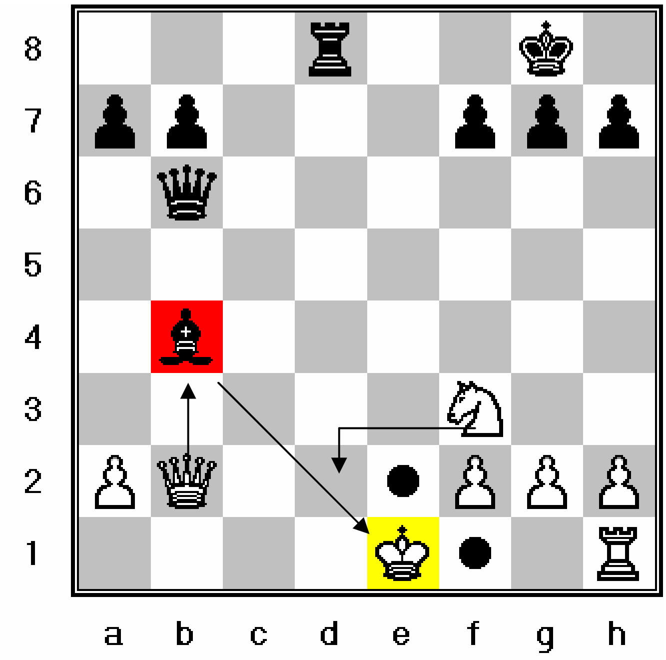
OPPOSITION - The Kings must stay apart.
Enemy Kings can never get close enough to capture each other.
There must always be at least one square between Kings.
This can be seen in the diagram (right). ➔
Neither King can move to a square marked with an “X”.
They oppose each other at one squares distance.
This situation is known as "The opposition".



Whenever the King is attacked we say that he is “in check”. The rules require that the King gets out of check on the very next move. Since the King is not allowed to be captured, it is an infinitely valuable piece and cannot therefore be given a numerical value.

SPECIAL MOVES - CHECK, CHECKMATE & STALEMATE

In the first diagram below the White King is attacked by the black bishop.



An attack on the King has a special name. It is called **CHECK**.

When the King is under attack we say the King is in check. When the King is in check, it must be saved immediately.

The King can never be captured or exchanged for another piece. If the King cannot be saved, the game is over. If your King is in check you cannot make any other move until you deal with the check right away.

There are three ways to answer a check

- Move the King to a safe square (Escape) - in this case the King could move to f1 or e2.
- Capture the attacking piece (Remove the attacker) - in this case the White Queen could capture the Bishop.
- Place another man in the line of fire (Block the check) - in this case the Knight could move to d2.

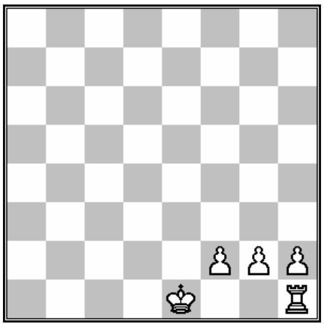
As all the legal ways of answering check are available in the diagram above, White may choose the method he thinks is best.

Okay, we now know almost all the rules.

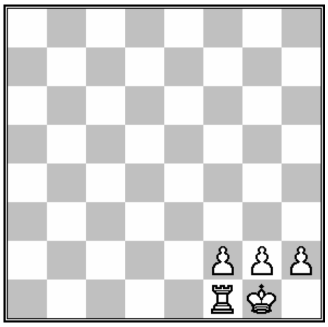
As soon as we cover a few more important points we will look at a real game.

SPECIAL MOVES - CASTLING

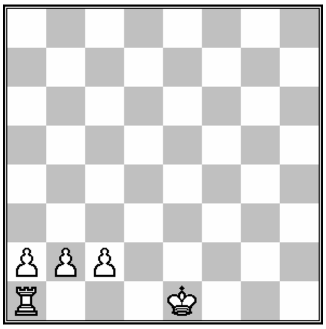
Once the battle commences the Kings need a safe home. The rules allow for a special move that safeguards the King. This is called castling. There are strict rules regarding when and how castling may take place. First we will illustrate the castling manoeuvre. When the Kings castle it is the only time in the chess game that two pieces may move at the same time. It is also the only time that the King can move more than one square at a time. It is also the only time a Rook may jump over another piece.



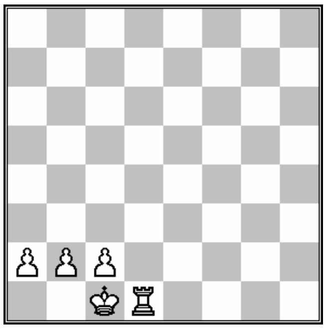
Before Castling Kingside



After Castling Kingside



Before Castling Queenside



After Castling Qeenside

CASTLING RULES
There are a number of rules that **must** be observed concerning castling.

•Being in check stops you castling. You cannot castle if you are in check.

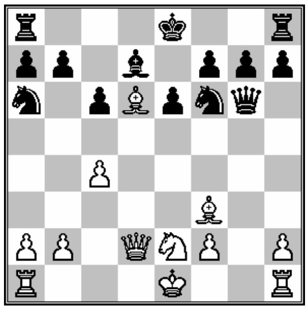
•You must get out of check first, then you may be able to castle later on.

•The King cannot cross a square controlled by an enemy man in order to castle.

•The King cannot move onto a square controlled by an enemy man when castling.

•You cannot castle if there are pieces between the King and the Rook.

•The King and the Rook to be used in castling must not have moved earlier in the game.



Our diagram opposite shows a number of these possibilities.

White cannot castle on the Kingside, since that would place his King in check from the Queen on g6.
He may castle on the Queenside, since the King does not move across a check, even though the Rook on a1 crosses a square which is attacked by the Black Queen.

Beginners are often confused, and think that you may not castle if you have ever been in check. This is quite wrong - as long as you have not moved your King it does not matter how many times you have been in check earlier in the game.

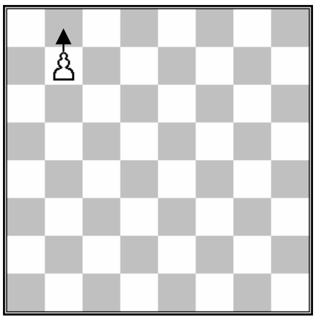
Remember this special rule about Kings: They can never allow themselves to be captured.

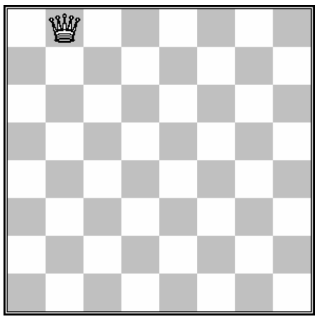
SPECIAL MOVES

PAWN PROMOTION Sometimes referred to as "Queening"

When a Pawn reaches the last rank it can become any piece other than a King. It cannot remain as a Pawn, but must take on a new role. It can become a Queen, Rook, Bishop, or Knight. You can have a new Queen even though you still have the original Queen on the board, and you can continue this process if you succeed in promoting more pawns.

Our first diagram below, shows a White pawn at b7, about to "Queen" at b8. In our second diagram below, The pawn has been "promoted". The pawn has advanced and White has chosen a new Queen, which replaces the pawn.





BEFORE QUEENING AFTER QUEENING

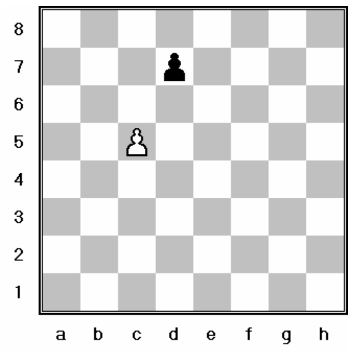
We call it "Queening", since nearly always a player will change the promoted pawn into a new Queen, because the Queen is the most powerful piece.

Important note:

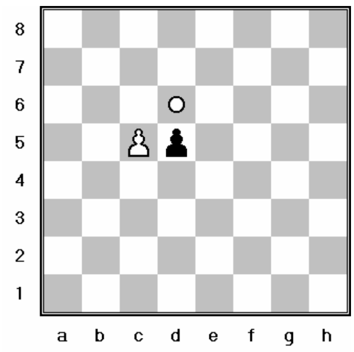
You may legally have many Queens or indeed, other pieces.

CAPTURING "En Passant" *Pronounced "On-Pass-on"*

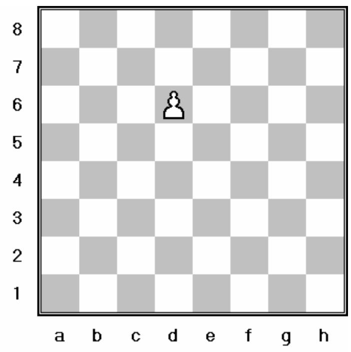
The "En Passant" rule



Before



Black's pawn advances



White has captured "en passant"

En passant is a French term meaning "in passing". It is Black's move in the diagram above (left). He has the option of advancing the pawn one square or two, as the pawn has not yet moved. It is reasonable to assume that if Black moves the pawn two squares he will avoid capture. However, White may capture it anyway. The en passant rule allows White to capture the pawn as if it had only moved one square ahead. This means that whether Black's pawn moves one square or two, it can be captured by White on the very same square.
It is a requirement of the rules that the "en passant" capture (if used) must be carried out right away. *It cannot be deferred,* or the right to play it is forfeited.
The diagram on the right above shows the position as White carries out the "en passant" manoeuvre. White removes the Black pawn from d5 and places his own pawn on d6.

Making the en passant capture is ***not*** compulsory

Capturing "En Passant" Further Explanation

This is one of the trickiest moves to learn and the single move that causes consternation among beginners. A small bit of history helps to introduce and to understand the en passant (French for "in passing") capture. During the early days of chess, pawns could only move a single square at a time. Several changes were introduced in Europe to speed up the game. One of these changes permitted pawns to move two squares if they had not yet moved.

But this rule change introduced an unfortunate situation. A pawn could now move all the way down the board to become a queen without the opponent's pawn ever having a chance to capture it. When the Black pawn moves forward two squares in a single move, the White pawn on the neighbouring file wants to be able to capture the pawn before the black pawn can advance further. The en passant rule applies here.

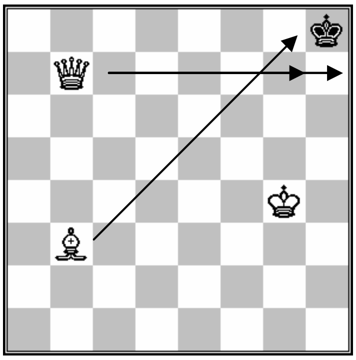
For one move, AND ONE MOVE ONLY, the White pawn can respond by capturing the Black pawn as if it had only moved a single square.

Note that only pawns can capture "en passant," and only a pawn on an adjacent file can capture in this way.

DRAWING THE GAME

Stalemate

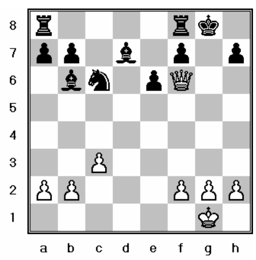
If the King is not in check, but cannot move without moving into check, and the player cannot move any other piece or pawn, then it is stalemate. This is regarded as a draw in spite of any material difference between the two sides. In the position below it is Black's turn to move, but his only piece cannot make a legal move. It is stalemate.



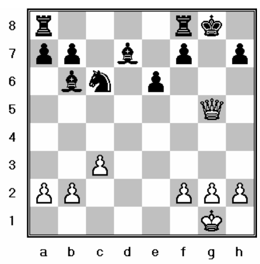
Perpetual Check

If a player is unable to escape from annoying checks at each consecutive move,
even though he has far more men than the opponent then it is a draw.
We call this Perpetual Check.
Let's see this in action below.

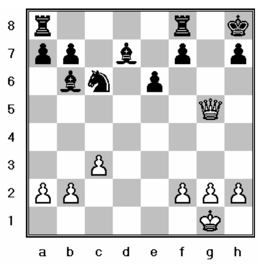
In the position shown in the first diagram below, the White Queen would not normally be able to cope with all the Black forces. But this is an exceptional case.



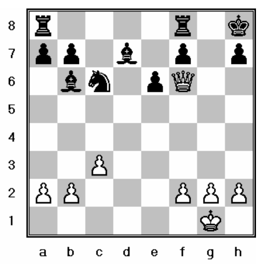
White moves the Queen to g5 “checking” the King.



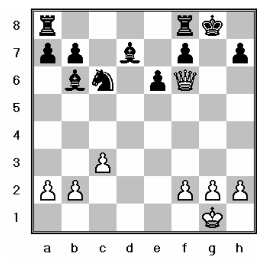
Black must move the King.



The King goes to h8.



The Queen returns to f6 “checking” the King.

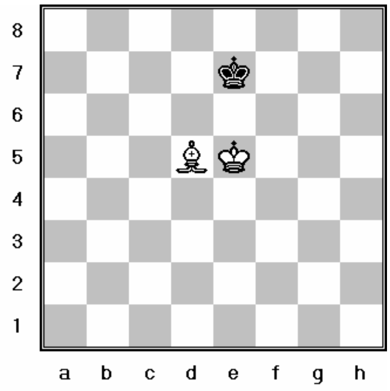


The King returns to g8 and we have arrived back at the same position as the first diagram.

White draws easily by repeating this process. Black is powerless to avoid this as his King is exposed and his pieces cannot prevent the checks.

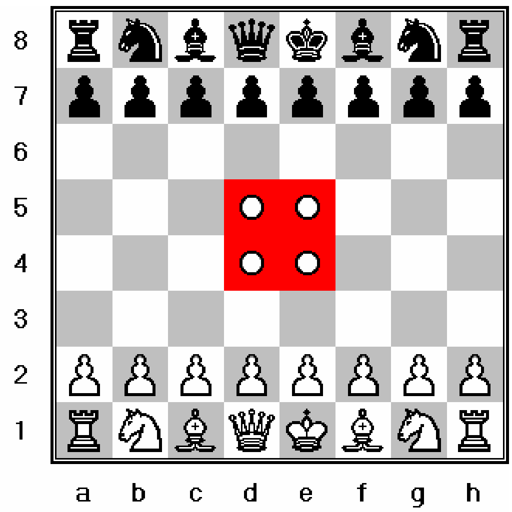
Insufficient Material

It is also a draw if neither player has enough men to checkmate the opponent, as in the diagram , where a King and Bishop cannot deliver checkmate without the help of other forces.



Another draw is by ***agreement***. If both players say it is a draw, then it is a draw.

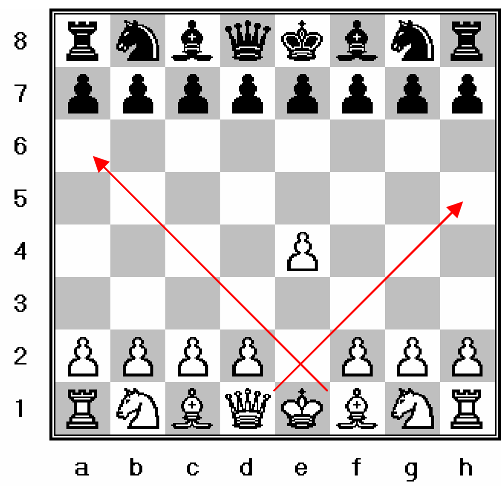
Finally, if the exact same position is reached three times in one chess game, a draw can be claimed. The exact same position does not have to happen three times in a row. However, it must be the same player's turn to move. This rarely arises.



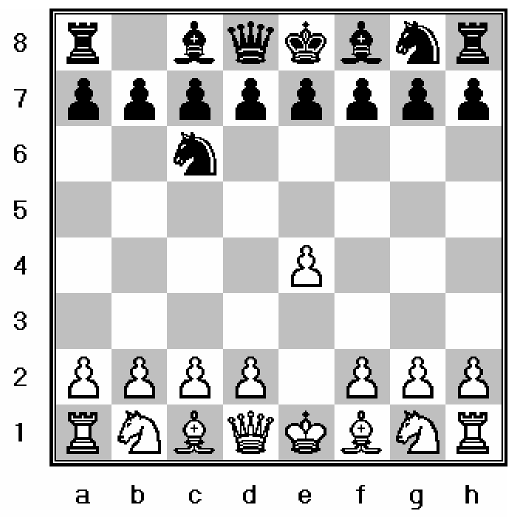
Time To Examine a Real Game

Note that at the start of the game, the only pieces, apart from pawns that may enter the fray are the Knights, since they are the only pieces that can jump over other pieces or pawns. Note also that the best location for our pieces is in or near the centre. We regard the centre to be the complex of squares highlighted in the diagram. It is important to exert some influence over these squares, for reasons that will be apparent later.

We give the moves in bold type, followed by an explanation

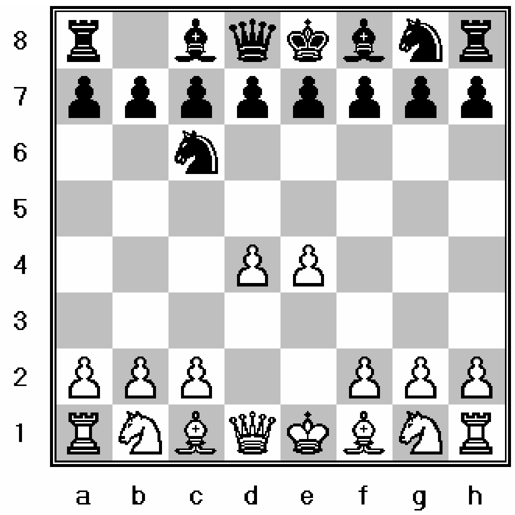


1.e4
White plays his e-pawn to e4. From here it "controls" or at least has an influence over two important central squares.
At the same time it enables his Queen and Bishop to enter the game when required.

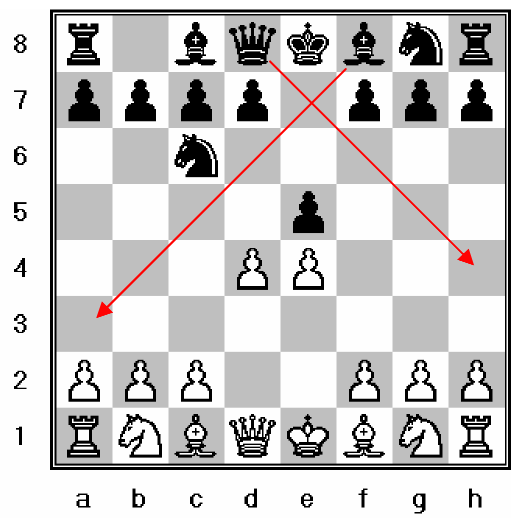


1...Nc6
While this move is not a mistake here, it is better to place a pawn in the centre.

It is best to play according to the three **Golden Principles of Opening Play**, namely:
1. Place a pawn in the centre and maintain it there.
2. Develop your pieces towards the centre.
3. Look after your King's safety. This is best done by castling.

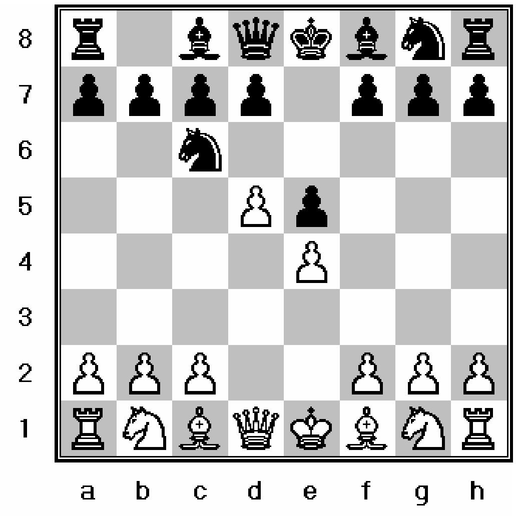


2.d4
This is an excellent move, exerting more influence on the centre, and enabling the dark squared Bishop to come into play.



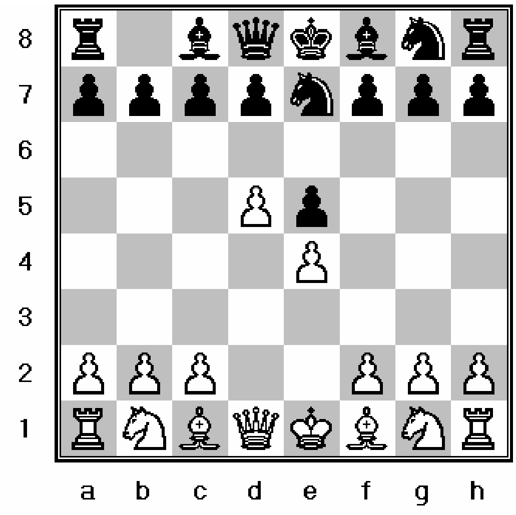
2...e5

A reasonable move, advancing in the centre and releasing the Bishop and Queen.

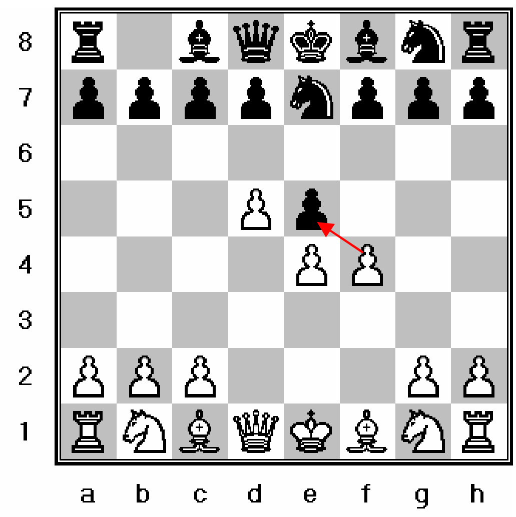


3.d5

White advances in the centre, attacking the Knight at the same time. We know that a pawn has a notional value of one point and a Knight is worth three, so the Knight must move or be lost.

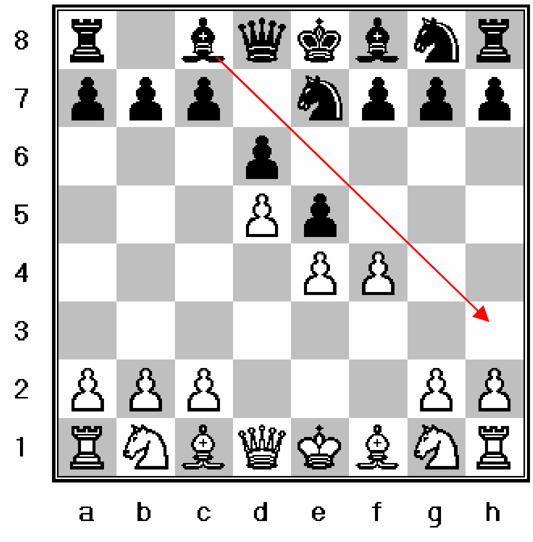


3...Nce7
Black moves the Knight to safety.
Note that as the knight at g7 could also move to this square (e7), we describe the move precisely - the Knight from c6 moves to e7.

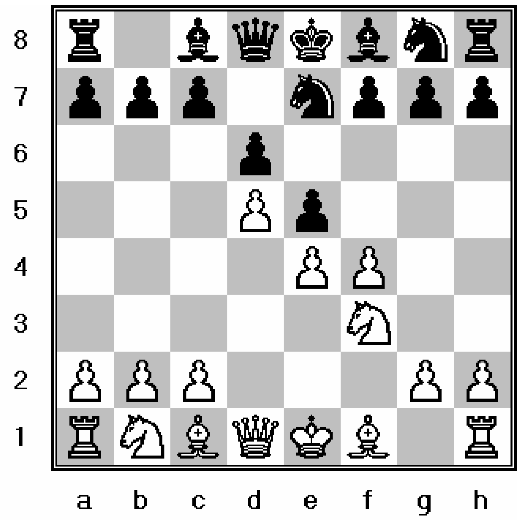


4.f4

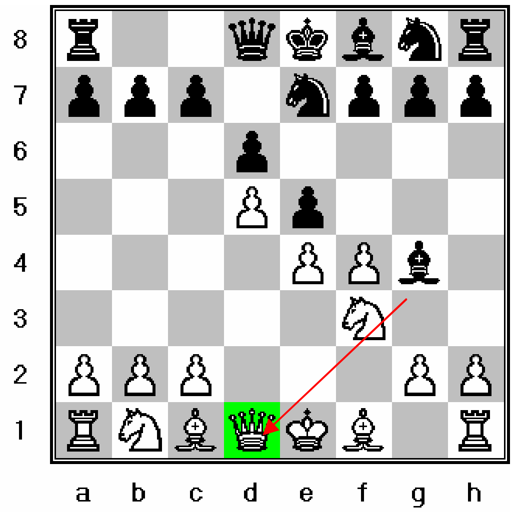
With this move White attacks the pawn at e5. Black could capture the White pawn at f4 but this would give up his influence on the centre. He therefore decides to defend the pawn while at the same time preparing to develop his light squared Bishop.



4...d6
Black defends the pawn at e5 and at the same time prepares to bring the Bishop at c8 into play.

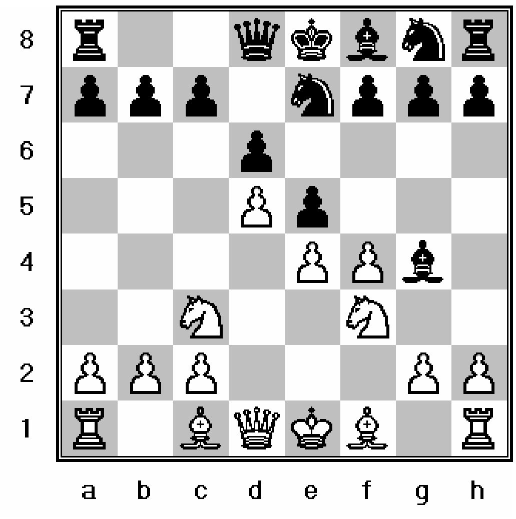


5.Nf3
White "develops" his Knight, adding pressure on the central squares and gets one move closer to castling.

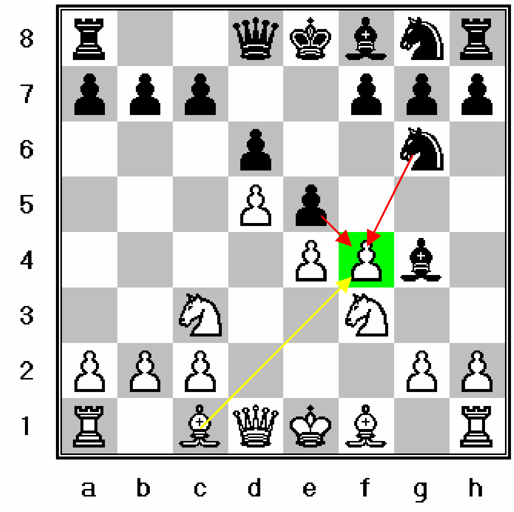


5...Bg4

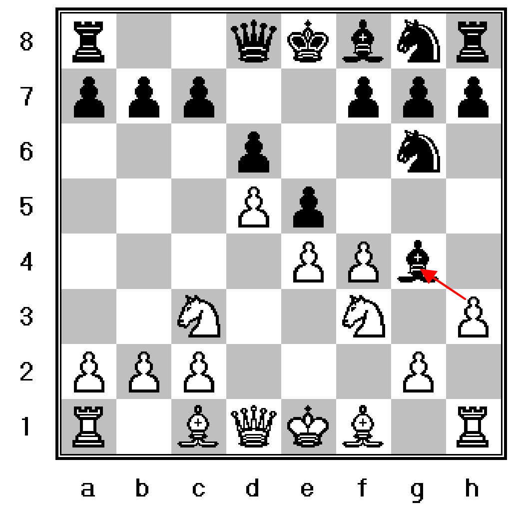
An instructive move.
Black reduces the effectiveness of the White Knight at f3 by "pinning" it against the White Queen. Note that if the Knight moves from f3 then the Queen at d1 would be lost. This is illustrated by the arrow. Remember, a Bishop is worth 3 points and a Queen is worth 9 points. If White moves the Knight at f3, he had better have a good reason!



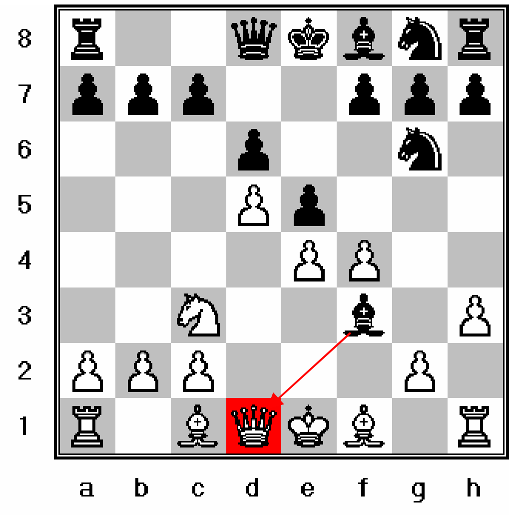
6.Nc3
White makes no specific or immediate threat with this move. He is mobilising his forces, or as we say in chess, he is developing his pieces.



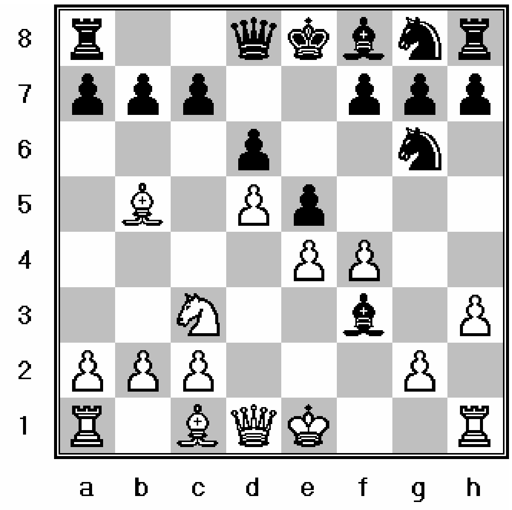
6...Ng6
The White pawn at f4 is now attacked twice, and defended only once (by the Bishop at c1).



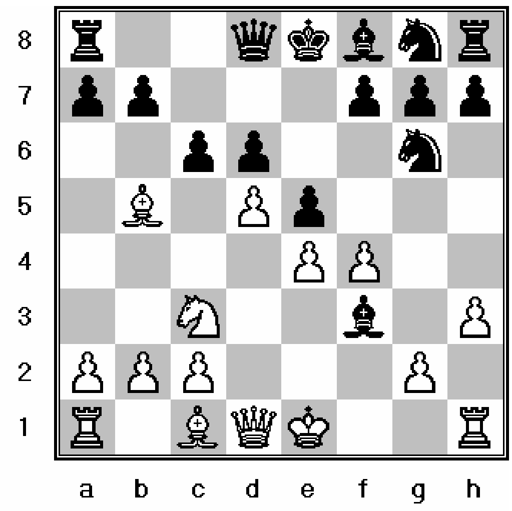
7.h3
As in war, the counter-attack is frequently used in chess. Instead of guarding his threatened pawn, White makes a counter-threat which cannot be ignored without loss, a Bishop being worth more than a pawn.



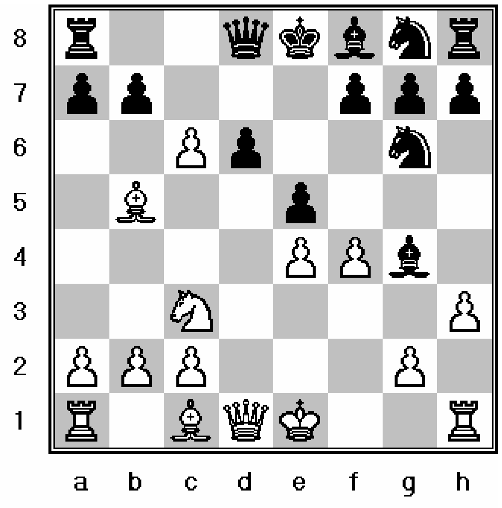
7...Bxf3
The White Knight is removed from the board and the Black Bishop occupies the square on which the Knight stood. Black now threatens to capture the White Queen on his next move.Note that the "x" in chess notation stands for "takes" or "captures".



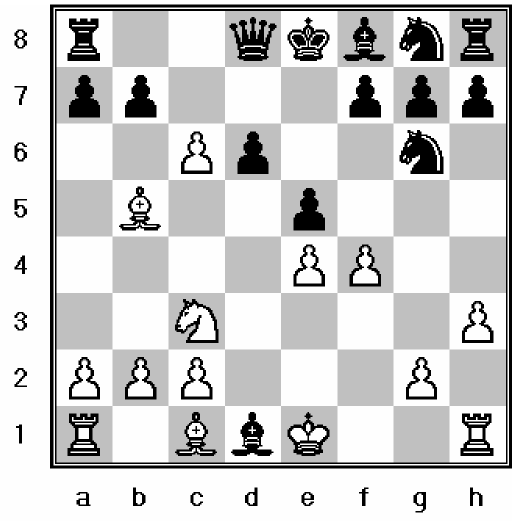
8.Bb5+
White moves his Bishop to a square on which it attacks the King. The White player calls out "check!" Black MUST drop everything and get his King out of check. A check is the most effective of all counter-attacks - one which MUST be answered. White can leave his Queen open to capture because he knows that Black is not allowed to capture it while his King is in check. Note that the plus (+) sign is used to denote check.



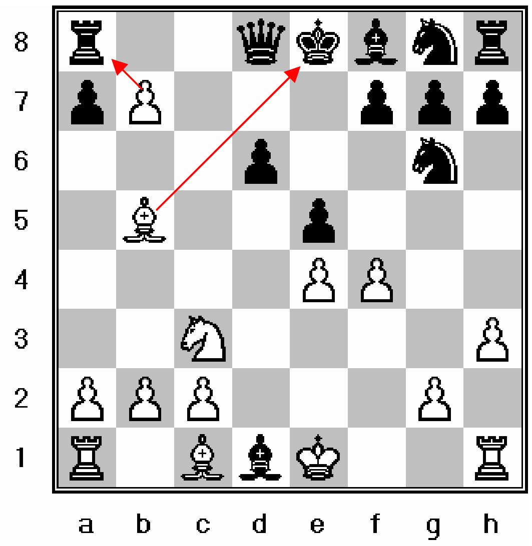
8...c6
Black chose to block the check, rather than move his King, as he would like to retain the option of castling later.



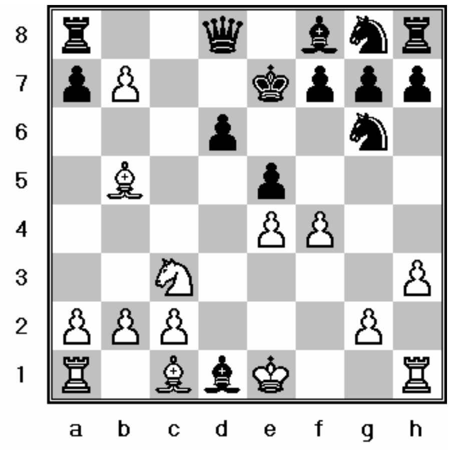
9.dxc6!!
White captures the pawn at c6 with his d-pawn! Has he forgotten that his Queen is attacked by the Black Bishop?
Please note: we use exclamation marks to indicate a good move.



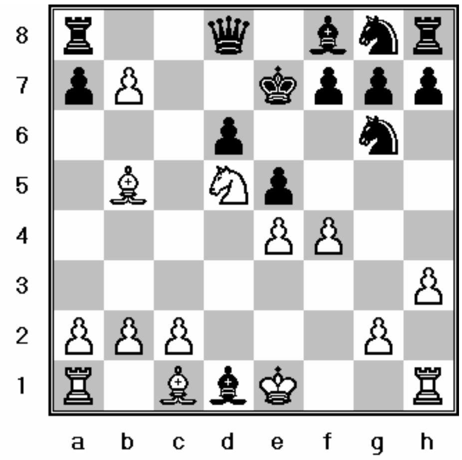
9...Bxd1?
Actually, White has not made a mistake. He has planned ahead and knows that if Black takes the Queen, he will win the game. This is an example of a "combination".
Please note: we use a question mark to indicate a bad or ill-considered move.



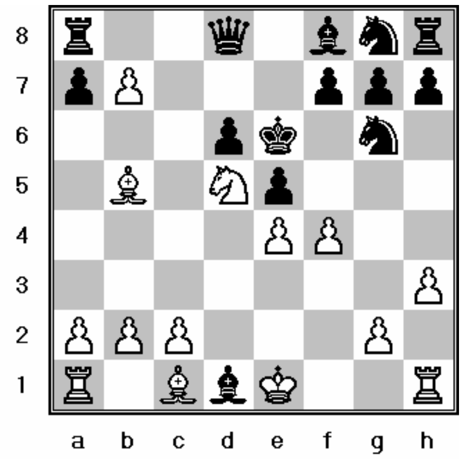
10.cxb7+
This is a "discovered" check. The attack on the King was unmasked by capturing with the White pawn which stood between the Bishop and the King.



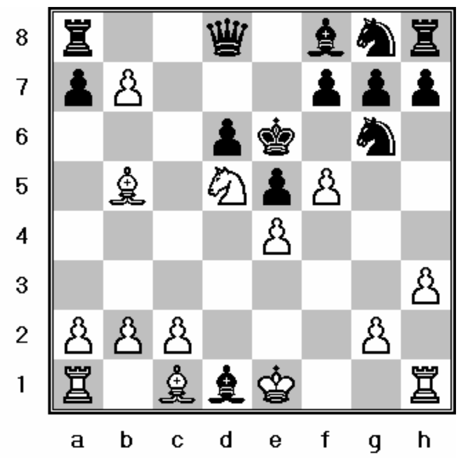
10...Ke7
Black moves the King out of check, rather than blocking the check with his Queen.



11.Nd5+
White is closing in for the kill. His Knight leaps to the attack and forces the enemy King to come forward and meet his doom. Having "sacrificed" his Queen, the most valuable of all the pieces, White must make forceful moves and give his opponent's King no opportunity to escape. Black now realises that the capture of the Queen was a mistake. This capture made it possible for White to launch an attack on the Black King.
Now Black has only one legal move. Can you see it?



11...Ke6
This move was "forced".
When a Knight gives check, The Knight must be captured or the King must move, since a Knight's attack cannot be blocked. Examine this position carefully and see if you can select White's next move. Note that Black's King is hemmed in by White's forces. The King cannot move to a vacant square as he would be moving into check. For the same reason, he cannot capture the Knight. White can now deliver the final blow.



12.f5# It's Checkmate.

Black cannot capture the pawn at f5, nor the Knight at d5 as they are both protected by the White pawn at e4. The flight squares at e7 and f6 are controlled by the White Knight and the square d7 is controlled by the White Bishop at b5.